

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6016

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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 6390

EXDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR

SECSTATE PASS ACTION SECDEF

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS/ MASS, EAID, ETRN, CB

SUBJECT: COMMERICAL CONTRACTS TO REDUCE RELIANCE ON USAF C-130S

1. FROM VISITORS TO PHNOM PENH AND FROM READING EXTENSIVE CABLE TRAFFIC FROM VARIOUS HEADQUARTERS, I CONCLUDE THAT WE ARE SEARCHING FOR WAYS IN THE SHORT RUN TO REDUCE AND IN THE LONG RUN TO ELIMINATE USAF C-130 AIRCRAFT SORTIES SUPPORTING CAMBODIA. THE PURPOSE OF THIS MESSAGE IS TO SUGGEST THE DISPTACHING TO PHNOM PENH OF A JOINT DOD-AID-STATE TEAM TO HELP US ELABORATE ALTERNATIVES TO USAF C-130 SORTIES BY CONTRACTING WITH COMMERCIAL CARRIERS EITHER IN BANGKOK OR PHNOM PENH. I DO NOT ADDRESS MYSELF IN THIS MESSAGE TO STEPS WHICH NEED TO BE TAKEN TO INCREASE KAF'S AIRLIFT CAPABILITY WHICH IS ALSO AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT IN ANY PROGRAM TO REDUCE USAF DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN CAMBODIA.

2. THE PRESENT HIGHER RATE OF USAF C-130 USE IS THE RESULT OF THE INTERDICTION BY THE ENEMY OF SURFACE LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS, PRESENT LACK OF ADEQUATE KAF

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AIRLIFT CAPABILITY, AND THE NATURE OF THE ENEMY THREAT.

SINCE THE ENEMY'S EFFORT AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS CALENDAR YEAR AGAINST PHNOM PENH, THE ENEMY HAS CHANGED HIS TACTICS AND IS NOW CONCENTRATING ON PROVINCIAL TARGETS. THIS DEVELOPMENT HAS CREAATED MORE ENCLAVES AND HAS ACTUALLY INCREASED THE NEED FOR AERIAL RESUPPLY. THE INCREASED REQUEST FOR USAF C-130 AIRDROP SORTIES OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS CLEARLY REFLECTS THIS CHANGE IN THE WAR.

3. IF WE ARE DETERMINED TO FIND ALTERNATE WAYS OF SUPPORTING AIRLIFT CAPABILITY FOR CAMBODIA--BOTH IN SHORT AND LONG RUN--I SUGGEST A TEAM OF EXPERTS, INCLUDING A LAWYER CONVERSANT WITH THE LEGISLATIVE RESTRICTIONS APPLICABLE TO U.S. ACTIVITIES IN THIS COUNTRY, BE SENT HERE SOONEST TO EXPLORE PROSPECTS OF LETTING CONTRACTS WITH COMMERICAL CARRIERS TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ACTIVITIES NOW CARRIED OUT BY USAF.

4. I AM THINKING IN TERMS OF A CONTRACT FOR AIR LAND MISSIONS WITH AIR CAMBODGE AND A CONTRAACT FOR LIMITED AIRDROP MISSIONS WITH A THILAND BASED FIRM. BOTH OPERATIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE DESIGNED TO ASCERTAIN THAT PERSONNEL ENGAGED IN THE EXECUTION OF THESE CONTRACTS DO NOT COUNT AGAINST CAMBODIAN HEADSPACE RESTRICTIONS. IT IS FOR THAT REASON THAT I SPECIFICALLY CITED AIR CAMBODIGE FOR THE IN-COUNTRY OPERATION BECAUSE IT IS A RELATIVELY LARGE, BONA FIDE AIRLINE WHICH ALREADY EMPLOYS A LARGE NUMBER OF THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS FOR ITS PRESENT OPERATION NOT LINKED TO A U.S. CONTRACT. AS WE EXPLAINED IN PHNOM PENH 6318, WE DO NOT VIEW SECTION 656 OF FAA AS A PROHIBITION AGAINST OBTAINING ESSENTIAL SERVICES BY NON-PERSONNEL SERVICES TYPE CONTRACTS.

5. WHILE WE ARE USING EVERY ONE OF THE 200 HEADSPACES AVAILABLE TO US, I WOULD WILLINGLY MAKE ROOM TO ACCOMMODATE VISITING TEAM FOR THIS IMPORTANT MISSION.
DEAN

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